

January 6, 2003

Mr. Michael Powell, Chair
FCC
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Mr. Powell,

On behalf of the Alliance for a Media Literate America, the nation's largest organization of media literacy educators, I urge the FCC to keep the needs of democracy at the top of its list of priorities as it considers media industry regulation in the coming year.

Democracy is best served when the public has access to the widest possible range of information sources. That need is undermined when fewer entities own an ever-increasing percentage of mainstream media outlets. We call on the FCC to be pro-active in protecting democracy. It is not enough to require that media companies do no *damage*. You should require those who request further media mergers to justify the need and explain how it will *enhance* democracy.

AMLA recognizes the right of corporations to operate profitably in a market economy, but they should not be allowed to do so at the expense of the public interest. Unlike other kinds of businesses, media owners and producers have a special responsibility to the American people, not only because the public "owns the airwaves", but because media play a unique role preserving democracy. Media function as a guard against abuse of power and a critical conduit between policy makers and the public they serve. Media consolidated into too few hands cannot adequately perform those functions.

As media literacy educators, we observe the power of media on a daily basis. Recent mergers have prompted trends that are cause for great concern, including a decrease of local programming and reporting, a narrowing of the range of points of view available in mainstream media outlets, and increasingly difficult access to independently produced media. None of these things serves the public interest.

The text of an official resolution passed by the AMLA is attached. You are welcome to cite it or to contact me directly (607.277.8833; frogow@earthlink.net) if I can be of assistance as you work on these important matters. The decisions you make today may affect the bottom lines of the businesses involved for the next quarter or two, but they will affect the future of the United States for the next quarter-century or two.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,



For office use

only 

Dr. Faith Rogow, AMLA President



AMLA Resolution

Whereas the Federal Communications Commission's mandate is to set communications policy that serves the interests of the American public and best supports the democratic process, and

Whereas corporate interests may overlap with, but should not substitute for public interests,

The Alliance for a Media Literate America therefore calls upon the FCC to establish and enforce rules for media ownership that ensure that all citizens have access to a wide range of media messages from a full array of diverse sources.

Adopted June 2002



only



For office use